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ATHENS, GREECE

November 17, a leftist terror group which has boasted of killing two U.S. officials here, has claimed it killed a conservative Greek newspaper publisher in what it said was a campaign to "strike down CIA agents."

A U.S. Embassy spokesman dismissed as "nonsense" claims that the slain publisher, Nicholas Momferratos, had been involved with the CIA.

In Washington, CIA spokeswoman Kathy Pherson said, "We wouldn't have any comment on something like that. It really doesn't serve any purpose."

Momferratos, 60, chairman of the board at *Apogeigmatini* (Afternoon) newspaper, died Thursday evening, moments after two gunmen fired a dozen bullets through a side window of his blue Mercedes limousine, striking his back and chest, Athens police said. The attack occurred in the city's fashionable Kolonaki district.

Momferratos' driver, Pangiotis Rousetis, was in "critical but stable condition" today after surgery to remove bullets from his arm and stomach, a spokesman for the Red Cross hospital in the Greek capital said.

Police sources who spoke on condition of anonymity said ballistic tests indicated a .45-caliber gun fired in Thursday's attack was the same weapon used in previous killings claimed by November 17. The other weapon was a .22-caliber gun, police said.

In a rambling, four-page typewritten leaflet found near the attack site, November 17 claimed it carried out the Momferratos killing and said: "We shall uncover and strike down CIA agents in the press."

The statement claimed Momferratos "became owner of *Apogeigmatini* with CIA money."

A U.S. Embassy spokesman, who spoke on condition he not be identified, today said, "The charges are nonsense. We deplore the killing."

Apogeigmatini, a popular Athens afternoon paper, opposes Premier Andreas Papandreou's Socialist government and supports conservative President Constantine Caramanlis, the country's head of state and a personal friend of Momferratos.

Papandreou, who condemned Momferratos' killing, met today with Caramanlis and discussed terrorism. An official statement issued afterward said the two Greek leaders "ascertained the need to intensify and organize more suitable measures to neutralize this threat."

After Momferratos was shot, three attackers drove away in a white Fiat with stolen license plates, police said. The car was later found abandoned 150 yards from the scene of the shooting, a city police spokesman said.

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